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MedCenterExtra

BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER, BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOLS OF MEDICINE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND DENTAL MEDICINE

July 15, 1997

Howard Koh named commissioner of the Department of Public Health

On Monday, Gov. William Weld named Howard Koh, MD, MPH, as the new commissioner of the Department of Public Health. Koh is currently director of the Cancer Prevention and Control Center at BMC and professor of public health, dermatology, and medicine at BUSM and SPH.

"I want to thank Governor Weld and Lieutenant Governor Cellucci for this tremendous honor," says Koh. "It will be a great privilege to serve the people of Massachusetts as the commissioner of Public Health."

Koh, who has been associated with Boston University Medical Center for nearly 20 years, also serves as the chair of the Massachusetts Coalition for a Healthy Future. The coalition, a statewide organization led by the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association, promotes statewide tobacco-control programs funded by a state cigarette tax. He is also on the American Cancer Society Board of Directors.

"Dr. Koh's work on cancer prevention and tobacco control puts him in the forefront of today's most pressing public health issues," says Weld. "He is one of Massachusetts' preeminent medical experts and we are fortunate to have him aboard as steward of the state's public health policy."

Koh received his bachelor's degree cum laude from Yale College in 1973, an MD from Yale University School of Medicine in 1977 and an MPH from Boston University School of Public Health in 1995. His training includes chief residencies in Internal

Medicine at Boston City Hospital and Dermatology at Massachusetts General Hospital. Koh is the only physician in the United States to be board certified in four specialties (internal medicine, hematology, oncology, and dermatology) and also have a public health degree.

"The state and the governor have made a wise choice," says Elaine Ullian, president and CEO of BMC. "Dr. Koh has my sincerest congratulations for this well-deserved appointment."

Dean Aram Chobanian, MD, dean of BUSM, lauds Koh's work in cancer prevention. "Dr. Koh is a renowned leader in the field of cancer prevention. His expertise and scholarship will serve the state of Massachusetts well."

Koh's professional accomplishments include helping coordinate tobacco control activities in Massachusetts that have led to rapidly declining cigarette consumption at a rate three times faster than the national average, as well as launching national skin cancer screenings, which have reached more than one million people. He is the recipient of numerous grants from the National Cancer Institute and the Center for Disease Control for Cancer Research and is a consultant to these organizations in cancer prevention efforts.

As one of the leading Asian-American public health professionals in the United States, Koh has testified before the U.S. Congress on Asian-American health issues and breast cancer screenings of Asian-American women.

Koh will assume the position in September when the post is vacated by outgoing Commissioner David Mulligan.